



Enforcement News

Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Consultant SOMA Environmental Settles with State over Fraud Allegations *Video Surveillance by State Water Board Enforcement Office was Key*

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SACRAMENTO – Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund (Cleanup Fund) Consultant SOMA Environmental Engineering Inc. (SOMA) settled with the State Water Resources Control Board over allegations of submitting false documents and padded invoices to the Cleanup Fund. SOMA is a Pleasanton, CA-based environmental consulting firm.

“The State Water Board’s Fraud Prevention Unit was able to efficiently and effectively demonstrate by using video surveillance that work was not being conducted as claimed,” State Water Board’s Office of Enforcement director Yvonne West said. “This settlement puts a stop to abusive billing practices and protects State taxpayers from environmental fraud, waste and abuse.”

The State Water Board alleged that SOMA made misrepresentations with reimbursement requests, invoices, and technical reports submitted to the Cleanup Fund and submitted a misleading well abandonment report that falsely stated field activities took place, but video surveillance evidence documented the activities were not performed.

As part of the December 2018 settlement between SOMA and the State Water Board, SOMA will pay a \$200,000 penalty, and the company and its principal, Mansour Sepehr, will be disqualified from participating in any State Water Board reimbursement program, including the Cleanup Fund.

The settlement agreement with SOMA can be viewed on the [Office of Enforcement website](#).

For more information on the State Water Board’s efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute cases of fraud, waste and/or abuse against the Cleanup Fund, see the [fact sheet](#). Also, the State Water Board maintains an online [list of disqualified businesses and persons](#) banned from working for the State of California.

Suspected fraud, waste and/or abuse against the Cleanup Fund can be reported by email at reportfraud@waterboards.ca.gov, by toll-free message line (1-855-263-0863), or by mailing or faxing a [Fraud Reporting Complaint Form](#) to the State Water Board at:





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